

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9489

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: GUARDIAN STORY

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY JAMES MACMANUS APPEARED IN
THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER ON JANUARY 13.

2. BEGIN TEXT:"AS DR. HENRY KISSINGER HAS IT, THE MOST
DISTASTEFUL MOMENT IN EIGHT YEARS OF OFFICE WAS FORCING
THE RHODESIAN LEADER, IAN SMITH, "TO COMMIT SUICIDE."
THIS OBSERVATION, MADE DURING THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S
FAREWELL PRESS CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY, WILL
RAISE HOLLOW LAUGHTER AMONG THE BRITISH DIPLOMATIC TEAM
IN AFRICA NOW TRYING TO REVIVE THE PROSPECTS OF A SECOND
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ROUND GENEVA CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA.

"MR. IVOR RICHARD, THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, IS AT
PRESENT IN KENYA PONDERING THE PERILOUS CIRCUMSTANCES
THAT SURROUND THE NEXT STAGE OF HIS SAFARI SHUTTLE.
AFTER A SIX NATION AFRICAN TOUR, WHICH INVOLVED DOUBLE
VISITS TO ZAMBIA AND TANZANIA, MR. RICHARD IS FACING THE
PAINFUL LIMITATIONS THAT ENCLOSE BRITISH DIPLOMACY IN

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

"HIS STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE RISKY ASSUMPTION THAT AN IDENTITY OF INTERESTS ON THE RHODESIAN ISSUE COULD BE

TANZANIA, BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA, ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. THE CHAIRMAN'S OTHER HOPE IS THAT MR. SMITH WOULD SEE REASON AND OFFER HIMSELF FOR A SECOND TIME AS A SACRIFICE TO THE DEMANDS FOR UNCONDITIONAL MAJORITY RULE. THE PRIME MINISTER'S ACCEPTANCE OF AFRICAN RULE IN SEPTEMBER WAS CONDITIONAL ON AFRICAN ENDORSEMENT OF THE ENTIRE KISSINGER SETTLEMENT PACKAGE. HE SHOWS NO MORE SIGN OF ABANDONING THOSE CONDITIONS THAN THE RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS DO OF ACCEPTING THEM.

"SO FAR NEITHER OF THE BRITISH ASSUMPTIONS HAVE PROVED WORKABLE. MR. SMITH IS BEHAVING LIKE A MAN WHO HAS SURVIVED AN ENFORCED GAME OF RUSSIAN ROULETTE AND SHOWS NO APPETITE FOR ANY FURTHER SUCH DANGEROUS FRIVOLITIES. AT THE SAME TIME THE GULF BETWEEN THE FRONT LINE STATES AND SOUTH AFRICA AS TO HOW MAJORITY RULE SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN SALISBURY LOOKS UNBRIDGABLE. TRUE THE FIVE PRESIDENTS HAVE MET ONE OF THE DEMANDS MADE OF RICHARD AND VORSTER LAST WEEK. THEY HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO ENDING THE GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST RHODESIA ON THE INSTALLATION OF A POWER TRANSFERRING PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THEIR LIKING. THAT IS, ONE DOMINATED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ALLIANCE LED BY JOSHUA NKOMO AND ROBERT MUGABE. THIS IS QUITE DEFINITELY NOT THE KIND OF TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION THAT MR. VORSTER HAS IN MIND TO SHAPE THE NEW ZIMBABWE.

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"THEREFORE SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH STILL HOLDS TO THE NOTION THAT A "MODERATE" PRO-WESTERN AFRICAN REGIME CAN EMERGE IN RHODESIA, IS UNLIKELY TO PROVIDE THE KIND OF PRESSURE ON SMITH WHICH MR. RICHARD REQUIRES TO KEEP THE CONFERENCE IN BUSINESS.

"IT IS BEGINNING TO LOOK AS IF MR. RICHARD'S SECOND MEETING WITH MR. VORSTER, FOR WHICH NO DATE HAS BEEN FIXED, WILL BE VERY MUCH THE LAST THROW OF THE DICE FOR BRITAIN'S LATEST RHODESIAN INITIATIVE. EVEN IF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PREMIER WERE WILLING TO GO BACK ON HIS OWN PLEDGE TO SMITH (TO SEE THE SETTLEMENT PLAN THROUGH ON THE PRECISE BASIS OF THE KISSINGER PLAN) THE RIGHTWARD DRIFT IN MR. VORSTER'S OWN POLITICAL PARISH MILITATES STRONGLY AGAINST RENEWED COVERT PRESSURE FROM PRETORIA ON SALISBURY.

"MR. RICHARD HAS NO MORE LEVERAGE OVER VORSTER THAN HE HAS OVER SMITH. DR. KISSINGER HAD THE POWER AND A SUFFICIENT ARRAY OF INDUCEMENTS TO BRING BOTH MEN AROUND TO HIS PLANS FOR A SETTLEMENT. COMPARED WITH

THE AMERICAN MAILED FIST TACTICS MR. RICHARD CAN ONLY
OFFER HIS MICAWBERISH BELIEF THAT MEN OF GOODWILL CAN-
NOT POSSIBLY COMMIT THEIR POLITICAL BELIEFS TO THE
RIGOURS OF OPEN-ENDED WAR. UNFORTUNATELY MR. SMITH

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FEELS THAT HE WOULD BE ASKING OF HIS WHITE COMMUNITY
A FAR GREATER SACRIFICE BY ACCEPTING UNCONDITIONAL
MAJORITY RULE WITHOUT REASONABLE SAFEGUARDS FOR THE
SECURITY OF THE MINORITY.

"MR. RICHARD'S ONLY REAL STRENGTH LIES IN THE
GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG ALL PARTIES TO THE RHODESIAN
CRISIS THAT MAJORITY RULE MUST AND WILL BE ESTABLISHED
IN SALISBURY. THE DIFFICULTY REMAINS THAT SMITH AND
VORSTER ON THE ONE HAND AND THE AFRICAN STATES AND
RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS ON THE OTHER ARE HOPELESSLY AT
ODDS ON HOW AFRICAN RULE SHOULD BE INTRODUCED.

"WHO FOR INSTANCE CONTROLS THE POLICE AND ARMY DUR-
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ING THE INTERIM PERIOD AND WHOSE FORCES WILL MAKE UP
SUCH SECURITY FORCES? THE PATRIOTIC FRONT INSIST ON A
GUERRILLA "LAW AND ORDER" FORCE WHILE MR. SMITH POINTS
TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE KISSINGER PACKAGE WHICH ALLOW
FOR RETENTION OF THE DEFENCE AND JUSTICE MINISTRIES BY
HIS OWN GOVERNMENT. AND SO IT GOES ON.

"THE POLICY OF THE FRONT LINE NATIONS REMAINS EX-
ACTLY AS PRESIDENT NYERERE DEFINED IT IN 1975 WHEN HE
SAID IN DAR ES SALAAM: 'IF THEY (THE RHODESIAN GOVERN-
MENT) ARE READY TO TALK ABOUT DECOLONISATION WE TALK.
IF THEY ARE NOT READY TO TALK WE FIGHT UNTIL THEY ARE
READY.'

"IN VERY SIMPLE TERMS THE BATTLEFIELD SITUATION IN
RHODESIA HAS YET TO EQUATE WITH THE POLITICAL SITUATION.
THERE ARE ONLY TWO SOURCES OF PRESSURE ON THE RHODESIAN
REGIME AND BOTH ARE SADLY OUT OF MR. RICHARD'S REACH.
MR. VORSTER CANNOT OR WILL NOT FORCE MR. SMITH BACK
TO GENEVA IN A MORE MALLEABLE FRAME OF MIND AND THE
NATIONALIST GUERRILLAS HAVE YET TO SHOW THE CAPACITY
TO DO SO EITHER. THUS WHILE DR. KISSINGER SPEAKS
LOFTILY OF HIS UNPLEASANT ROLE IN MR. SMITH'S SUICIDE,
BRITAIN'S HAPLESS CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN HAS FOUND HIMSELF
DEALING WITH A LIVELY CORPSE--AND NO SIGN OF WILLING
GRAVEDIGGERS."

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